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Commonwealth Secretary-General Opens Innovation Awards For Sustainable Development

A Commonwealth prize recognizing the most impactful innovations in sustainable development has been launched by the Secretary-General.

Prizes totaling £45,000 will be awarded to innovators from member countries who suggest forward-looking solutions, which advance the values of the Commonwealth Charter.

Five thematic categories of the competition include improving the lives of people; boosting prosperity; protecting the planet, promoting peace; and building partnerships for development in the Commonwealth.

An independent jury will select 15 winners, who will each receive a trophy, a certificate and £3,000 in prize money and ongoing support

for their work.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland declared the awards open for entries during the annual Commonwealth induction programme, which was held virtually.

She said: “Now more than ever we need the drive of inventive and imaginative minds to be applied in solving the problems and overcoming the challenges being faced by communities throughout the Commonwealth. Year by year, we draw huge encouragement when we learn of the impressive fresh approaches being adopted and ingenious new concepts being successfully brought into operation in our member countries.

“The purpose of my Commonwealth Secretary-General’s Innovation for SDGs Awards is to recognize the enterprise and achievement of those who are serving communities in pioneering ways. By bringing their endeavors to wider attention through our Commonwealth networks, we are able to assist them towards attaining even greater success and to encourage further development and wider adoption of innovation for the benefit of people in others of our member countries and elsewhere.

“Broadening cooperation and accelerating innovation are key to achieving the targets of the SDGs so that our more marginalized and disadvantaged sisters and brothers are able to share in sustainable progress and inclusive prosperity – particularly in building back better from the ravages of the pandemic towards greater resilience.”

Christopher Nesbitt, from Belize, received a prize last year under the Prosperity category for his work on carbon farming and food security.

He said: “In the 30 years I've been working in this field, the Commonwealth has shown the greatest interest and given me the most encouragement.”

Entries will be judged on their impact or potential to advance one or more of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in Commonwealth countries.

The competition is open to Commonwealth citizens and Commonwealth country-based organizations, including those in public, private or civil society sectors.

Nominations, including self-nominations, can be made via an online platform from 5 November to 31 January 2021.

Women and young people are especially encouraged to apply.

[<https://www.thecommonwealth.io/awards/> | Apply for the Innovation for Sustainable Development Award]